


PC116	<div>SEVERE STRESS MIMIC HEART DISEASE DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC</div> <div>Fa'iza Abdullah¹, Mohd Zhafri Mohd Razib¹, Mohd Basri Mat Nor ²</div> <div>¹Department of Family Medicine, Kulliyyah of Medicine, International Islamic University Malaysia1 ²Department of Anaesthesiology and Intensive Care, Kulliyyah of Medicine, International Islamic University Malaysia2. Corresponding author: Fa'iza Abdullah Email: drfaiza@iiu.edu.my</div> <div></div>																		
<div>INTRODUCTION</div> <div>1. The COVID-19 pandemic resulting in economic recession has negatively affected many people's mental health due to isolation, burnout, or financial crisis resulting in job loss linked to poor mental health outcomes (Panchal et al., 2021).</div> <div>2. This case described a young working adult man who suffered from severe stress during pandemic COVID-19 presented with heart disease symptoms. He was referred to a cardiologist, and all investigations related to cardiovascular disease were normal. He came back with worsening symptoms. Depression Anxiety Stress Scales 21-item (DASS-21) (Lovibond et al., 1995) revealed a very high score for stress and anxiety.</div> <div>3. Stress management counselling includes detecting the underlying stress, mainly contributed by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, behavioural changes, stress coping skills and spiritual empowerment. A twelve-week follow-up reassessment of stress level has shown a significant improvement in DASS score.</div>	<div>Management:</div> <div>He participated in four sessions of stress management counselling. The 1st one-hour session instilled positive thinking and behavioural changes caused by the underlying stress, counselled stress coping skills and spiritual empowerment. Reassessment at twelve-week followed up showed significant improvement of stress and anxiety scores. Table-2: Stress Management</div> <div><table><tr><th colspan="2">STRESS MANAGEMENT</th></tr><tr><td>Behavioural Changes</td><td>Positive thinking: Identify the stressor which creates the most stress and develops a positive response (American Psychological Association. 2018). To take responsibilities steadily, discuss with the superior and colleague for assistance, and look at the additional responsibilities to help others. This practice of giving help to others may also reduce his anxiety (Nelson, S. K., et al., 2016). Encouraged to be assertive, get organized, and divert to a healthy lifestyle such as balanced daily diet, exercise suited to his daily schedule, good sleep pattern, and leisure.</td></tr><tr><td>Stress Coping Skills</td><td>Deep Breathing Method - diaphragmatic breathing (Relaxation Technique 2020) & Progressive Relaxation Method (Gaylord, C., et all. 1989)</td></tr><tr><td>Spiritual Empowerment</td><td>Islamic Integrated Meditation (Anchor, M. et al. 2015). Five times per day for 5 to 10 minutes, sit in a relaxed position, eyes closed, and repeat a word (zikir) with each breath. Recite or listen to Qur'anic verses blend with controlled breathing. Remembrance of Allah.</td></tr></table></div>	STRESS MANAGEMENT		Behavioural Changes	Positive thinking: Identify the stressor which creates the most stress and develops a positive response (American Psychological Association. 2018). To take responsibilities steadily, discuss with the superior and colleague for assistance, and look at the additional responsibilities to help others. This practice of giving help to others may also reduce his anxiety (Nelson, S. K., et al., 2016). Encouraged to be assertive, get organized, and divert to a healthy lifestyle such as balanced daily diet, exercise suited to his daily schedule, good sleep pattern, and leisure.	Stress Coping Skills	Deep Breathing Method - diaphragmatic breathing (Relaxation Technique 2020) & Progressive Relaxation Method (Gaylord, C., et all. 1989)	Spiritual Empowerment	Islamic Integrated Meditation (Anchor, M. et al. 2015). Five times per day for 5 to 10 minutes, sit in a relaxed position, eyes closed, and repeat a word (zikir) with each breath. Recite or listen to Qur'anic verses blend with controlled breathing. Remembrance of Allah.										
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<div>CASE REPORT</div> <div>A 44-year-old gentleman presented with intermittent chest tightness, left upper arm discomfort, and difficulty breathing for one day. He denied any chest pain, sweating, or syncope attack. He also experienced easy fatigue, intermittent palpitation, and left upper limb cramps that disturbed his sleep for the past year at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. As the patient was obese, hypertensive, had high cholesterol diagnosed five years ago, and had a family history of cardiovascular disease (both his parent), he was referred to the cardiology clinic to investigate unstable angina. He was discharged from the cardio clinic after all investigations were normal. The history raised suspicion of underlying stress, and he screened for stress and anxiety using the DASS-21 questionnaire showed mild depression and severe anxiety and stress scores.</div> <div>Table-1: Investigations Result</div> <div><table><tr><th>INVESTIGATIONS</th><th>RESULTS</th></tr><tr><td>ECG</td><td>No abnormality detected</td></tr><tr><td>Cardiac Enzymes</td><td>Normal range</td></tr><tr><td>Cardiac stress test</td><td>No ischemic changes</td></tr><tr><td>Echocardiography</td><td>Normal cardiac function</td></tr><tr><td>Blood Investigations</td><td>TFT/RFT/LFT/FBS – Normal FLP – Within the target</td></tr><tr><td>DASS-21 SCORE</td><td>Mild depression</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Severe stress</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Severe anxiety</td></tr></table></div> <div>He has been severely affected by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic with mixed feelings of fear, anxiety and intense stress, moreover an increased workload at his workplace, thus worsening the somatic symptoms.</div>	INVESTIGATIONS	RESULTS	ECG	No abnormality detected	Cardiac Enzymes	Normal range	Cardiac stress test	No ischemic changes	Echocardiography	Normal cardiac function	Blood Investigations	TFT/RFT/LFT/FBS – Normal FLP – Within the target	DASS-21 SCORE	Mild depression		Severe stress		Severe anxiety	<div>DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION</div> <div>Identifying mental health illness poses a dilemma as it is not easy to discriminate symptoms of cardiovascular disease from psychiatric diseases like anxiety and severe stress. Stress can influence the course of many medical and psychological conditions such as high blood pressure, irritable bowel, depression, and anxiety (MedicineNet. 2021).</div> <div>The patient’s medical problems seem to have worsened due to the escalating somatic symptoms due to severe underlying stress impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, it affected his quality of life and led to social dysfunction.</div> <div>The stress management method was counselled by integrating behavioural changes, stress coping skills, and spiritual empowerment. This holistic method has undoubtedly facilitated the patient dealing with negative stress at the workplace and current life challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic.</div> <div>Conclusion:</div> <div>Consultation skills in primary care are vital to achieving a timely mental health diagnosis. Early intervention of extreme stress is essential to prevent psychiatric disorders by integrating behavioural changes, stress coping skills, and spiritual empowerment.</div> <div>REFERENCE & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</div> <div>American Psychological Association. (2018), Coping with Stress at Work. Retrieved from https://www.apa.org/topics/healthy-workplaces/work-stress#</div> <div>Anchour, M., Bensaid, B., Mohd Nor, M. R. (2015) An Islamic Perspective on Coping with Life Stressors. Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht and The International Society for Quality-of-Life Studies (ISQOLS) 2015. DOI 10.1007/s11482-015-9389-8</div> <div>Gaylord, C., Orme-Johnson, D., & Travis, F. (1989). The Effects of the Transcendental Meditation Technique and Progressive Muscle Relaxation on, E.g., Coherence, Stress Reactivity, and Mental Health in Black Adults. International Journal of Neuroscience, 46(1-2), 77–86. DOI: 10.3109/00207458908991618</div> <div>(The author would like to express gratitude to the Sultan Ahmad Shah Medical Centre @IIUM Research Grant (SRG2118-0018).)</div>
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